

LACDMH CO-ORGANIZES ME & MY SHADOW FAMILY FUN DAY



“Me & My Shadow Family Fun Day” was a family/community-building event designed to give caregivers, care providers, professionals and other community members who parent or work with children 0-5 years ways to strengthen the adult/child relationship. The event supported efforts of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to celebrate National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week, and increase awareness of the importance of building strong systems of care to meet young children’s mental health needs.



Disguised as a fair at Martin Luther King Park in Long Beach, over 20 community partners and organizations came together to create opportunities for children and parents to explore and learn through arts and crafts activities. Children were able to take the lead in play and physical activities while their adults shadowed them and learned from them and their creative approaches to using the materials offered. And, the adults present also interacted with health, early care and education and mental health professionals who guided them in learning more about the benefits of these types of interactions between young children and their adults while learning about services and resources available in the community.



“Me & My Shadow Family Fun Day” was co-hosted by Project ABC – About Building Connections for Young Children and their Families, a SAMHSA-funded partnership. This event was organized with the collaboration of the Los Angeles County Departments of Mental Health, and Children and Family Services, Children’s Institute, Inc., For the Child, Pacific Asian Counseling Services, Ties for Families, The Long Beach Early Childhood Education Committee, and the University of Southern California. Event partners also included First 5 LA and Best Start LA, Long Beach Early Literacy, Head Start, Long Beach Councilmember Dee Andrews, Childnet, South Bay Center for

Counseling and many other organizations and individual community members committed to improving access to resources and the overall well-being and health of young children.



Being a parent or guardian is one of life's most demanding roles. In the past decade, much has been learned about early childhood needs and ways to strengthen the relationships between adults and children to promote healthy social and emotional development. Young children exposed to five or more significant adversities in the first three years of childhood face a 76 percent likelihood of having one or more delays in their cognitive, language or emotional development. Those who care for young children – and particularly children with emotional or behavior problems – face serious challenges. Reaching out to families and caregivers in places they go every day – such as recreational centers, medical facilities and preschools – helps them learn about and access the services their children need more easily.

Project ABC is designed to create a system of care for young children who are in need of mental health services in the Los Angeles area. The project is a collaboration of Children's Institute, For the Child, the Los Angeles County Departments of Mental Health and Children and Family Services, Pacific Asian Counseling Services, Ties for Families, and the University of Southern California.